Sconce jury adds to list of guilty verdicts

LOS ANGELES (AP) — More than eight years after an illegal crematorium was shut down in Hesperia, the former owners of a Pasadena funeral home have been found guilty of conspiring to unlawfully remove body parts from corpses they were paid to prepare for burial or cremation.

Authorities contend the couple removed the body parts at their now-defunct Lamb Funeral Home without permission and sold them to an organ donor bank.

The Superior Court jury convicted Laurieanne Lamb Sconce, 57, and her husband, 60-year-old Jerry Sconce, of one count each of conspiracy on Tuesday. Laurieanne Sconce also was con-

Please see SCONCES, B2▶

NewspaperArchive by Storied

Victorville Daily Press, April 13, 1995 Pg. 11, Victorville, California, US

https://newspaperarchive.com/victorville-daily-press-apr-13-1995-p-11/

▶ **SCONCES** / *From B1*

victed on one count of failing to include required language in a trust agreement.

The couple said the acts occurred at their ceramics factory in Hesperia, which was being used illegally as a crematorium. But they blamed their son.

David Sconce, 37, pleaded guilty to 21 counts and served about half of a five-year prison sentence.

Tuesday's verdicts were in addition to eight convictions the jury returned last week against the Sconces. Seven of those convictions were against Laurieanne Sconce and included unlawful removal of body parts, forgery and misappropriation of a trust account.

The Sconces were acquitted Tuesday on a total of nine other counts of illegally removing body parts. Laurieanne Sconce also was found innocent on two counts of failing to deposit trust funds within 30 days.

With the current convictions, Laurieanne Sconce faces up to six years in prison. Her husband faces a maximum of three years and eight months.

Judge John Ouderkirk said more verdicts likely would not affect Laurieanne Sconce's sentence, but they might affect her husband's sentence.

The Sconces and their son were arrested in 1987 and charged with conducting mass cremations, mixing ashes and extracting dental gold from bodies.

The jury was scheduled to deliberate on at least eight other counts today.

Aside from those eight counts, Ouderkirk said a mistrial might be declared on a number of remaining counts after the jury forewoman said she did not believe the jury would be able reach verdicts on them.

At one point Tuesday, Ouderkirk said he received a letter from the employer of one juror stating that her absence from her job was creating "a great hardship on the company."

The judge told attorneys that extending the trial beyond tomorrow would likely require the juror's dismissal and force a delay in deliberations on the remaining verdicts. An alternate would have to be used, and deliberations on the remaining counts would have to begin anew, Ouderkirk said.

The couple, along with David, formerly owned and operated the respected Lamb Funeral Home mortuary on Orange Grove Boulevard in Pasadena and a crematory in nearby Altadena.

The three were arrested after Hesperia fire officials discovered an illegal crematorium operating under the name Oscar Ceramics. Inside, on Jan. 20, 1987, investigators found the partial remains of between 25 and 30 human bodies.

Laurieanne and Jerry break out brown-bag lunches during court breaks. They no longer own the mortuary and said they live nearly penniless, unemployed in Arizona.

The Sconce case has been the subject of three paperback books.

Jury adds - continued

NewspaperArchive by Storied

Victorville Daily Press, April 13, 1995 Pg. 12, Victorville, California, US
https://newspaperarchive.com/victorville-daily-press-apr-13-1995-p-12/